

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

STATE IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROPOSAL

Mission

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) is to provide leadership in improving the coordination of social service transportation, to ensure that funds are maximized to serve as many transportation disadvantaged Tennesseans as possible, and to enhance transportation services and accessibility.

Coordination and Collaboration with State Agencies

TDOT utilized funding from the United We Ride coordination planning grant to convene a working group composed of state agencies, providers, and non-profit organizations that serve persons with disabilities, older adults, children, low-income individuals and others who are transportation disadvantaged. The following Departments of Tennessee State Government were represented:

- Department of Transportation
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Education
- Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Department of Children Services

- Commission on Aging and Disability and
- Division of Rehabilitation Services.

Providers and non-profit organizations were represented by the following:

- Chattanooga Area Regional Transit Authority
- East Tennessee Human Resource Agency
- Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency
- Murfreesboro Housing Authority
- Northwest Tennessee Human Resource Agency
- South Central Tennessee Development District and,
- Center for Disability and Employment.

Utilizing the ~~Tennessee Transportation System Assessment~~ (Attachment A), the working group analyzed the current status of transportation coordination efforts in Tennessee. The assessment demonstrated the need for a focused coordination effort and the need for both a state-level and regional coordinating councils.

While the numerous benefits to coordination were quickly identified, several coordination barriers were also recognized during the assessment process. A coordination benefit for one entity may appear to be a barrier for another, as some departments have more available resources than others, which could impact their ability and/or willingness to coordinate. The working group recommended the development of a briefing paper to promote the benefits of transportation coordination and request for an Executive Order to create the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation (Attachment B). The fact sheet will be distributed to state agencies, service providers, non-profit organizations and advocacy groups.

Consumer Involvement

The working group members were tasked with the responsibility of identifying state and regional advocacy and consumer groups, and key individuals within each organization, which are representative of each respective agency's social service programs. Each of the identified groups and individuals will be sent a survey concerning transportation services offered their constituents to determine successful coordination efforts and any transportation service deficiencies. Representatives from state and regional advocacy/consumer groups will have membership positions on the regional coordinating councils and inclusion in the working group.

Project Activities

Throughout 2005, representatives from state, local, and regional agencies worked together to complete the *State Framework for Action* and to develop a *Statewide Action Plan* as a part of Tennessee's United We Ride Planning Grant. Twenty-five individuals participated, including state agencies that are involved in transportation, along with regional Human Resource Agency representatives, public transit agencies and others who represented consumer perspectives. From the *Framework for Action* exercise, it was evident that Tennessee "needs to take significant action" or "needs to begin" in virtually all areas.

The resulting *State Action Plan* identified the need to formalize coordination through an Executive Order creating the Tennessee Council on Coordinated Transportation. The Executive Order is expected to be signed in early 2006. The United We Ride Implementation Grant will be used to implement the Executive Order and

develop the foundation for successful transportation coordination in the State of Tennessee.

Since the State is the first phases of the coordination process, Tennessee will focus on Priority 3 (the development of a cross agency coordinated tracking and accountability system; including real time eligibility, billing, and reporting), a topic which was identified during the *Framework For Action* exercise as a significant problem for funding agencies and service providers. When the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation has convened, the State will work with the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) to identify and improve emergency preparedness efforts, particularly for individuals who are elderly, those with disabilities and low-income individuals. Tennessee will work toward identifying means to support the development of transit pass programs. The benchmarking activities to be undertaken during 2006 will lay the foundation for coordination efforts during the following years. The following table shows the projected timeline and major milestones. This timeline assumes that the Executive Order will be signed in early 2006 and the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation will be in place by March.

Project Time-line Activities/Milestones	Months											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Appoint/Train State Council												
▪ Set State Goals/Priorities			◆									
▪ Collect State Budget/Program Data									◆			
▪ Develop Data Coordination Plan												
▪ Annual Evaluation												
▪ Quarterly Meetings			◆			◆			◆			◆
Appoint/Train 12 Regional Councils												

▪ Set Regional Goals/Priorities							◆							
▪ Collect Local Budget/Program Data										◆				
▪ Develop Data Coordination. Plan														
▪ Annual Evaluation														◎
▪ Quarterly Meetings							❖				❖			❖

❖ Quarterly Meetings ◆ Deliverable ◎ Evaluation

The initial activity will be to orient the State Council members and to assist them in the development of state goals and priorities. A major activity required by the Executive Order is to complete a full assessment of federal and state funded programs and budgets related to the provision of transportation services. A related effort is to establish a data warehouse of real-time information about each transportation program. Where possible, the data will include recipient eligibility information that will enable transportation providers and funding agencies to easily and reliably determine who would be eligible for funding under the various programs. The detailed plan for developing the data warehouse will be developed during the last quarter of 2006. A year-end evaluation will be included to mark progress and identify any needed adjustments to the state plan.

The twelve (12) Regional Councils will evolve in a similar fashion, but within a shortened time frame for council implementation. Once the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation is in place, the member state agencies will be asked to appoint representatives to the twelve Regional Councils (including consumers, local agencies and transportation service providers). In addition to supporting the state and local level data/budget collection efforts, the Regional Councils will be tasked with the development of a comprehensive inventory of local transportation resources available in each region. The details of the plan will be developed during the last quarter of 2006. A

year-end evaluation will be included to mark progress and identify any needed adjustments.

Evaluation Plan

Since Tennessee is in the initial phase of coordinating transportation services, the plans and milestones will need to remain somewhat flexible and may need to be adjusted as directed by the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation and the twelve Regional Councils. Thus, the first annual program evaluation will be viewed as a progress report. The primary evaluation criterion will be to determine if the State was able to complete the activities in the plan (as amended by the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation) within the established timeline and if not, to identify the barriers that precluded completion of the plan. The progress report will include individual and group interviews with the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation and Regional Council members to determine their level of satisfaction with the progress of the Council and to identify any needed changes the will improve the process. The evaluation will be conducted by an independent agency. The evaluation report will be submitted to the Office of the Governor for review.

Priority 3: Development of a cross agency coordinated tracking and accountability system, including real time eligibility, billing, and reporting.

In June 2005, Tennessee Department of Transportation completed a needs assessment of fifteen (15) rural and small urban transit agencies in the state of Tennessee. The Needs Assessment Report identified and recommended specific ITS technologies that would enhance operations and customer service for multiple agencies in Tennessee. Another purpose of the Needs Assessment Report was to develop a statewide request for

proposal to procure demand-response scheduling and dispatching software, CAD/AVL, and MDTs for all rural and some urban transit systems. The request for proposals is scheduled for release in early 2006. The ITS enhancements will enable the systems to provide more trips without increasing the fleet size, to reduce deadhead miles, to reduce fuel costs, to collect reliable data, to track vehicles in real-time, and to provide for regional coordination.

The Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation will be tasked with establishing a data warehouse of real-time information about each transportation program. Where possible, the data will include recipient eligibility information for the various transportation programs. The ITS enhancements will provide the framework for the implementation of the coordinated transportation data warehouse.

United We Ride Implementation Grant Budget

Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meeting expenses, supplies, postage. 	\$ 5,000.00
12 Regional Councils for Coordinated Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meeting expenses, supplies, postage, mileage expense 	\$25,000.00
Printing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brochures, newsletters 	\$ 5,000.00
Consultant /Evaluation	\$40,000.00
TOTAL	\$75,000.00

Letters of Support

In support of the Tennessee Department of Transportation's application for the United We Ride Implementation Grant, correspondence was received from the following individuals:

- Phil Bredesen, Governor, State of Tennessee
- Virginia T. Lodge, Commissioner, Department of Human Services
- James G. Neeley, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Lana C. Seivers, Commissioner, Department of Education
- Virginia Trotter Betts, Commissioner, Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
- John A. Keys, Commissioner, Department of Veterans Affairs
- Ted R. Fellman, Executive Director, Tennessee Housing Development Agency and
- Viola P. Miller, Commissioner, Department of Children's Services.

Letters of support will be sent separate from the grant application via fax transmission.

ATTACHMENT B



FACT SHEET

For more information contact TDOT:
 Sherri Carroll at 615.253.1043
 Kathy Dannenhold at 615.253.1035

Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) has initiated plans to promote development of a coordinated transportation system for the State of Tennessee.

A key element of the coordination plan is to request Governor Phil Bredesen to sign an Executive Order creating the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation.

The purpose of the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation is to ensure that public and community transportation resources are coordinated among various state programs so that high quality, reliable, efficient, and cost-effective transportation services will be available to the citizens of Tennessee now and in the future.

The concept for the Council was developed through a coordinated planning effort that began about a year ago. In late 2004, the Federal Transit Administration awarded a *United We Ride Planning Grant* to the State of Tennessee. The planning grants were offered as part of a federal initiative to encourage the coordination of human services transportation.

TDOT used its grant to convene a working group composed of a dozen state-level agencies including the Department of Human Services, Commission on Aging & Disability, Department of Education, Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Department of Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities, Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as representatives from a half-dozen local and regional entities. The working group met during the summer and fall of 2005 to map out a strategy to enhance the coordination of public transportation in the state. Establishment of the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation was identified as being key to the initiative's success.

TDOT's Commissioner Gerald F. Nicely is optimistic about the potential benefits to be gained from coordinating public transportation in Tennessee and is working closely with other state agencies to support this effort.

As proposed the Tennessee Council for Coordinated Transportation would include commissioner level policymakers representing State agencies that fund or support individuals who rely on public transportation services, particularly persons with disabilities, senior citizens, low-income individuals, and others who may be transportation disadvantaged. Consumer representatives also will be included on the Council. Among the Council's responsibilities would be to:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of transportation funding resources administered by state agencies.
- Identify duplication and gaps in the provision of public transportation services.
- Create opportunities for improved coordination of information about available transportation resources and program eligibility.

The TCCT will be supported by a network of Regional Councils for Coordinated Transportation. The Regional Councils will include agency and consumer representatives corresponding to the TCCT. These Regional Councils will be responsible for supporting, evaluating, and overseeing transportation coordination efforts at the local and regional levels.